795 ion, Othman, became Caliph. During his period of office Othman allowed nepotism to affect his appointment of office holders and some rebellious officers from Egypt, disliking his governor of that province, appeared in Medina and in the fracas that followed Othman was murdered. On his death Muawiya, Governor of Damascus, who had strengthened his position in Syria by a far-sighted policy towards the inhabitants, announced himself as avenger of his kinsman Othman and made fiery speeches in the Damascus Mosque. Ali, the Prophet's first cousin and son-in-law, for he had married Muhammad's daughter Fatima, was, however, recognised by many as the rightful Caliph. Ali established himself in Iraq, where most of his supporters lived, and for a number of months skirmished verbally and physically with Muawiya. Finally the two great Arab leaders came to blows at the battle of Siffin in 657. At first the fight went in favour of Ali, but the wily Muawiya, seeing this, suggested that the matter should be decided not by war but by the Quran. Ali was unable to refuse this appeal to a higher authority and arbitration followed, the proceedings of which are not fully known, but which resulted in both candidates being disqualified from the Caliphate. This was a success for Muawiya, who so far had not laid claim to this position and so lost nothing, while Ali had been declared Caliph by his supporters and was forced to ignore the decision. Both leaders retired to their respective provinces and in 661 Ali was murdered by a fanatic of the Kharajite sect. The members of this sect had been Ali's followers but had broken with him on account of the arbitration, which they considered illegal, saying that the sword should have decided the dispute. On Ali's death Muawiya over-ran Iraq and Persia and came to terms with Ali's elder son, Hassan, to whom he granted a pension. When Muawiya died he was succeeded by his son Yazid, and in 680 Ali's younger son, Hussein, together with his family and a small band of followers, left Medina for Kufa in Iraq, where he had been promised support. The treacherous Kufans broke their word, and on the plain of Kerbela the small band of men, women and children were killed or taken prisoners. It is in mourning for this event that the Shiites of Bahrain still hold their Passion Play on the 9th and 10th of the Arabic month of Muharram. The death of Hussein under such tragic circumstances transformed what had been a political dispute into a religious issue, and the breach thus made between the Orthodox Sunnis and the Shiites has been widened down the ages by the activities of fanatics on both sides.

The Sunnis have been all-powerful under the Umayyad and Abbasid Caliphs, the Seljuqs and the Ottoman Turks, while the Fatimids of Egypt and the Safavids of Persia have been of Shiite origin. Today the Shia are mostly found in Iraq, Persia and Pakistan, while the Sunni are in the majority in other parts of the Islamic world. In the islands of Bahrain the majority of the Shia are of the moderate Ithnashariya sect and the Sunnis are of the Malaki rite.

142 The typical Bahrain Arab is short and slight in build, but on the whole he is strong and healthy, the average height of a man is 5' 5".

In complexion the people vary greatly, some, especially those who work in offices, are very fair, while the African element in the population has produced the opposite colouring. During the past ten years the fashion among the men of Bahrain for wearing partly European dress has developed rapidly, mainly due to the operations of the oil company, where long flowing robes are not only a nuisance but often dangerous. The older men, however, and the members of the Ruling Family still wear the traditional Arab dress which can be seen in its full glory in the picture of H.H. The Ruler. The basic garment is the "thobe," a long shirt fastened up to the neck, above it comes a cloak of brown, white or black wool, with gold braided edges, the "bisht" or "aba". On the head is a small skull cap, not usually visible, over which is a white or coloured headcloth "gutra' held in place by means of a black or white wool ring, called "agal." The last was originally a camel hobble which the bedouin in the desert used to wear on their heads when travelling, removing it when in camp, but today it has lost its original use and is just an article of attire. Members of the Ruling Family, all of whom use the title "Shaikh," wear gold head-rings on formal occasions, while H.H. The Ruler and the senior members of the family wear swords and daggers in gold scabbards.

The purdah system still exists in Bahrain, although it is gradually being modified, and women are veiled when they appear in public; the more old fashioned wearing black masks concealing the upper part of the face, the younger contenting themselves with veils of black net. Although many women in the towns wear European clothes, nylons and cosmetics, they never appear outside their houses without a voluminous black cloak which covers them from the tops of their heads to the ground. In the country the Baharna women wear a large square shawl, black, blue or sometimes brightly covered, which conceals the clothes they wear. Despite the impression which may have been given by this description of veiling still current in Bahrain, the women of the country are now living a much wider life than formerly. Many girls go to the schools where as well as doing lessons they play games and do gymnastics, and what they learn at school gives them more interests at home when they marry. Family parties are commoner and husbands will now allow themselves to be seen driving with their wives in cars, which some years ago was almost unknown. In many ways the life of the women of Bahrain is improving. However, a fact that visitors to Bahrain should remember is that attempts to take photographs of women are usually strongly resented though the ordinary Arab male is fairly immune to the photographic enthusiasm of visiting Europeans.

In Bahrain, unlike most other parts of the Arab World, the upper classes of Arab society have retained their traditional dress, while the working classes have adopted shirts and trousers. A result of this is that one should not be surprised if young men dressed in Arab clothes speak excellent English, know much about European history, French cooking and American enterprise, for they have probably been educated at the American University of Beirut or in Egypt or England. The